Because every writer needs a reader.

Writing Center Annual Report 2020-2021
CSB/SJU Writing Center Mission Statement

The College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University Writing Center exists to help students write better papers and become better writers. We offer an informal atmosphere where students can bring questions to their peers. Our one-on-one sessions allow both the tutor and the student to work through procedures and strategies in order to help improve the student's writing abilities. We are resources in all stages of the writing process, from brainstorming to perfecting a final draft. We do not proofread papers; rather, we believe in the value of teaching students how to brainstorm, how to organize their thoughts, how to clarify their assertions, how to recognize and fix their grammar mistakes, and so on. We believe in teaching students skills they can use in all their writing. Each session is intended to reach beyond a specific assignment.
Inclusivity Statement

The College of Saint Benedict and Saint John’s University Writing Center exists to help students with all aspects of the writing process and equip them with skills needed to be successful writers. Our mission is to empower students by providing an inclusive, welcoming and safe space which respects all persons.

We acknowledge that language and writing are powerful tools which shape the way we think and act within social institutions. We also recognize that these tools influence our understanding of history and have been used to silence voices and maintain discriminatory systems of power. We are committed to dismantling these systems of oppression which have marginalized fellow community members.

We are called to be effective leaders who are continually learning as well as educating others as we work to create transformative inclusion and be actively anti-discriminatory. Therefore, we are dedicated to creating an equitable atmosphere which recognizes and appreciates cultural diversity to ensure all students feel welcomed and valued. We also commit to the larger CSB/SJU mission to challenge our own practices through self-reflection.

Specific actions we are taking to achieve these goals include, but are not limited to, the practices listed below:

· New peer tutors receive specific instruction on inclusive tutoring practices during initial training;
· All peer tutors undergo additional training annually on inclusive tutoring;
· An anti-discrimination task team of peer tutors focuses special attention on inclusion and diversity;
· Current peer tutors are members of the interview team in selecting new tutors;
· This statement was originally drafted by two peer tutors, Brigid Smith and Sarah Broghammer, with input by all tutors.

The Writing Center will continue to evaluate and evolve this statement and these practices as necessary. For further information or if you have questions, please contact the Writing Center or the director, Dr. Kyhl Lyndgaard (writingcntr@csbsju.edu or klyndgaard@csbsju.edu)
The Process

Writing Center peer tutors conduct one-on-one appointments with undergraduate students, graduate students, and faculty to assist them in any type of writing, at any stage in the process. Students reserve either a 30-minute or 60-minute appointment with an available tutor through The Hive. Additionally, students are welcome to stop in either Writing Center on weekdays to see if a tutor is available at that time. Tutors conduct collaborative appointments that encourage growth beyond any single assignment. While the Writing Center helps with mechanics, it emphasizes global concerns rather than sentence-level issues. After an appointment is completed, the tutor records information about the appointment on The Hive, as well as sends an email to the faculty member in charge of the assignment (unless requested not to by the student).

Writing tutors also lead small group workshops in the classroom to introduce students to the Writing Center and assist with their writing. These sessions encourage group conversation and feedback amongst fellow classmates, as well as the peer tutor and the students. Tutors met with 42 classes this past academic year.
Adaptations for COVID-19

One-on-one appointments:
In response to COVID-19, the Writing Center conducted appointments via Zoom, rather than face-to-face. After scheduling an appointment through The Hive, students were contacted with a link to the Zoom meeting for the day and time of their appointment. During appointments, students were asked to share their screen with the peer tutor and as with face-to-face meetings, the paper was read aloud. These efforts promoted collaborative and productive sessions.

Group Tutoring:
This academic year the peer tutors led 42 group tutoring sessions in classes, 34 of which were for INTG 100 or INTG 200 classes. Tutors reported to group tutoring sessions on Zoom. The professor would then create breakout rooms with an even distribution of students and one peer tutor per room. This process was used for all courses given the hybrid delivery requirements of this academic year.

Staff Meetings:
All-staff meetings were held on Zoom. These meetings functioned as a time to discuss peer tutor task teams, writing pedagogy, and to check in on each other. As in previous years, peer tutors individually met with the director, Kyhl Lyndgaard, one time each semester to discuss goals. These meetings were also conducted via Zoom.
2020-2021 Statistics

In the 2020-2021 academic year, 1,072 total appointments were conducted at the Writing Center through Zoom. The majority of the students who used the Writing Center were first-years, which is consistent with previous years. More appointments were made in the fall semester than in the spring, with the fall having 659 appointments and the spring having 413 appointments respectively. September had more appointments than any other month, with a total of 236. With the new Integrations Curriculum, our usage patterns are changing due to reduced numbers of first-year writing courses in each semester.

In total, 534 clients used the Writing Center. 32% of all appointments came from students who visited one time, 68% of students are those who visited two or more times. Student usage ranged from 18% of students returning twice to 2% returning nine times. Further, 17% of the Writing Center’s users returned 10 or more times throughout the academic year.

62% of students who used the Writing Center were CSB students and 38% were SJU students.

One area of growth was in our group tutoring sessions, where tutors are able to reach large numbers of students in an efficient manner. Peer tutors led 42 group tutoring sessions in various classes in the 2020-2021 academic year. 81% of these classes were INT 100 and INT 200 classes, with INT 100 comprising 62% and INT 200 comprising 19% respectively. The other 19% was comprised of classes across the curriculum. 18% of these classes were lower division, while 1% was upper division. Additionally, more group tutoring sessions took place in the fall semester than the spring semester.
“I’m very grateful to [the peer tutors] for coming to my INTG 100 class today. I thought they did a marvelous job interacting with the students and identifying significant areas for development in their writing.” ~ Integrations 100 Professor
I wanted to say that [my peer tutor] did an excellent job, and that she was extremely helpful!" ~SJU Senior
“The tutors who visited our class were so wonderful and so helpful that ALL my students they would like another session.” ~Integrations 100 Professor
Creating a Writing Culture on Campus

Special Events:

In the 2020-2021 academic year, the Writing Center hosted and co-hosted several events at CSB/SJU to promote reading and writing beyond the classroom:

At the end of B Block, the Writing Center held its annual Night Against Procrastination on Zoom. This year, the Writing Center co-hosted this event with CSB/SJU Libraries, Math Skills Center, Academic Advising, and FYX. The event provided a social study space with study break activities, a quiet study room to work in community, as well as individual breakout rooms for one-on-one tutoring.

The Writing Center also offered a Secret Garden Poetry reading during Earth Week. Hosted by Director, Kyhl Lyndgaard, this event took place outside in the HAB Courtyard, and participants shared original and favorite nature poetry in a fun, socially-distanced way.

Additionally, the Writing Center participated in National Novel Writing Month, commonly known as NaNoWriMo, throughout November. The goal of this national challenge is to write 50,000 pages of a novel by the end of the month. The Writing Center held several events during November where peers could come and work on their novels in a creative, communal space. This past year, these events took place via Zoom.

Pictured are peer tutors Oliver and Avery and volunteer tutor Larry working at the Secret Garden Poetry event.
**Task Teams:**

Task teams are comprised of small groups of tutors who work on specific projects throughout the year. The 2020-2021 academic task teams included: a tutor handbook team, an assessments and statements team, a publicity team, a physical upkeep team, a writing blog team, an events and collaborations team, a website and The Hive team, an inclusion and anti-racism team, and a workshops and modules team.

This year, our teams made many accomplishments. The tutor handbook team thoroughly revised and edited the handbook; the publicity team established a consistent social media presence on Instagram, posting weekly. The events and collaborations team planned the events listed above and worked with publicity to advertise said events; member of the workshops and modules team, Katie Wagner, created Argument Structure Graphs* that can be used as visual aids in explaining how to organize an argument in writing; member of the workshops and modules team, Madelynn Reichmann, also created a “Scientific Writing Principles for Tutors” guide, which highlights the differences in writing for the humanities and hard sciences; the inclusivity and anti-racism task team, along with input from the entire staff, created the Inclusivity Statement that is listed above.

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*One of the three Argument Structure Graphs created by Katie Wagner, member of the workshops and modules team*
Plans for the 2021-2022 Academic Year

Looking ahead, the Writing Center is transforming the front room of HAB 103 into an open, communicative space which will be used as a Collaborative Studio on weekday evenings. Additional office space at HAB 103 will remain reserved for one-on-one tutoring at all times.

The Collaborative Studio will be a place where students can come work individually or with their peers on different writing tasks. The goal of these collaboration sessions will be to offer a casual, productive space for students and provide access to writing center resources, including peer tutors and materials.